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decrypting means, (b) an identification of a subset of information stored on said medium containing said identified portions, and (c) duration of at least one of searching, identifying, decrypting, reading and using of said database portions, for generating signals indicating the result of said metering, and storing said generated signals in said memory means; and

means operatively connected to said decrypting means and to said memory means for preventing said decrypting means from decrypting information whenever said metered indicating signals are not successfully stored in said memory means.

52. A system as in claim 42 wherein said control and communicating means includes;

a memory; and

monitoring means, operatively connected to said decrypting means and to a communications network, for monitoring the quantity of at least one of: (a) information decrypted by said decrypting means and (b) information identified by said searching means, for controlling said signal communicating means to communicate an indication of said monitoring to a billing facility over said communications network.

53. A system as in claim 42 wherein said monitoring means also determines identifying characteristics of at least one of (a) said decrypted portions (b) of said identified portions and controls said signal communicating means to communicate said identifying characteristics to said billing facility.

54. A system as in claim 42 wherein:

said at least one storage medium also stores unencrypted index information correlating unencrypted search information with portions of said at least one encrypted database.

55. A system as in claim 42 wherein:

said at least one storage medium also stores encrypted index information correlating search information

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with portions of said encrypted at least one database.

56. A system as in claim 42 further including:

a first memory means, operatively connected to said decrypting means, for storing said decrypted information; and

a second memory means, operatively connected to said metering and communicating means and different from said first memory means, for storing said metered usage.

57. A secure database access system comprising:

at least one storage medium storing at least one textual database in encrypted form, said at least one database including at least one collection of textual information, said at least one storage medium also storing index information, said index information correlating portions of said at least one encrypted database with search information;

at least one host signal processor, operatively connected to said at least one storage medium, said at least one processor preprogrammed so as to: (a) accept search criteria in response to user input thereto, (b) search said index information, (c) identify, in accordance with said search of index information, the portions of said at least one encrypted database which satisfy said search criteria, and (d) reach at least one of said identified encrypted database portions from said at least one storage medium;

means for decrypting at least one portion of said at least one encrypted database to produce corresponding decrypted information; and

decoder control logic means, operatively coupled to said host processor and said decrypting means and adapted for operatively connecting to a telecommunications network, for metering the usage of information decrypted by said decrypting means, wherein said decoder control logic means includes means for telecommunicating said metered usage over said telecommunications network to a remote location.

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